



Trump's budget hinges on economic growth numbers no one believes

"It's a fake forecast."

By Emily Stewart | Mar 11, 2019, 3:20pm EDT



President Donald Trump walks to the White House after a weekend at Mar-a-Lago in March 2019. | Al Drago/Getty Images

President Donald Trump's **2020 budget proposal** contains some *really* rosy projections when it comes to economic growth.

The Trump administration released its third budget proposal on Monday. Titled "A Budget for a Better America," the \$4.7 trillion budget includes a dramatic increase in defense spending and \$8.6 billion for Trump's border wall and deep cuts to social safety net programs, including Medicare. The budget is highly unlikely to go anywhere in Congress. **(Vox's Tara Golshan has a full explainer on the Trump budget proposal.)**

But also embedded in Trump's proposal are some very good projections for economic growth — a little too good, probably, when compared to more realistic government and private estimates.

This is also a way to downplay the debt problem

Republicans **don't seem too concerned** with deficits and the rising US debt anymore compared to when Obama was in office, but Trump's over-the-top economic estimates are still a way to try to downplay what his proposals would mean for the debt.

Roll Call noted that Trump's budget projects \$2.8 trillion in additional revenue compared to the CBO over the next 10 years. But if its forecast is off and the CBO's is right, any deficit savings are going to disappear. And **the tax bill has already** caused the deficit to swell.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, which advocates for fiscal responsibility, **estimates** that the Trump budget would add more than \$10 trillion to the national debt. The group's president, Maya MacGuineas, in a **statement** on Monday slammed the Trump administration for its "fantasy assumption" on GDP growth. "Every independent forecaster foresees growth to average closer to 2 percent over the next decade," she said. "Assuming an extra point of growth serves no purpose but to mask the high deficits and debt likely to materialize under the president's budget."

And even with its rosy assumptions and deep cuts to spending, **the Trump budget still anticipates it won't balance for another 15 years.**

"Somewhere in the budget is getting back to balance, and they can't do it unless they assume these outside growth numbers," Zandi said.

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